T U L L E and O R A D 0 U R

A German-French tragedy

by

Otto Weidinger

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V e r d u n

1916 1984

"France and Germany have learned the
lessons of history.
Europe is our common homeland. We are
heirs to a great European tradition.
That is why, 40 years ago, we
ended the fratricidal conflict and started
building our future together.
We have reconciled, we
have understood each other,
we have become brothers."

Joint written statement by French President Mitterrand and German Chancellor Dr. Kohl on the occasion of the commemoration of the fallen soldiers in Verdun — Douaumont

on September 22, 1984

Preface

We wholeheartedly agree with the joint declaration made by the two statesmen in Verdun. However, in this ever-growing friendship between France and Germany, there is still a wound that is slow to heal — Tulle and Oradour.
Since 1944, this chapter has played a prominent role in Allied war propaganda, and we must unfortunately conclude that nothing has changed in the mass media around the world, including, regrettably, in the Federal Republic of Germany, to this very day.

The war propaganda of yesterday and today is obviously intended to become an integral part of tomorrow's history.

However, the historical truth forbids this.

In the case of Oradour, mistakes were made on both sides. But justice and truth demand that the blame be apportioned equally between the two sides. Certainly, the Maquisards fought for the liberation of their country, for which we have complete understanding. However, it must not be forgotten that this fight, which was forced upon the German troops, was carried out in flagrant violation of the German-French armistice agreement of 1940, the Hague Convention on Land Warfare, and the international Geneva Convention (see attachments!). It was therefore foreseeable that countermeasures and reprisals would be expected from the German side.
According to international law and
on the express orders of the OKW. This was not changed by the fact that the Allied High Command under General Eisenhower declared the French resistance movement to be part of the "Internal French Armed Forces." Since this declaration was made unilaterally and was not recognized by Germany, it had no effect under international law.

If these serious violations of bilateral treaties and international agreements were nevertheless accepted, then after the end of the war not every French death in this unequal struggle could be attributed to the regular German troops as murder under civil law.
As early as 1953, weeks of trials had taken place before the Permanent High Military Court in Bordeaux for Tulle and Oradour, with the entire world press in attendance. In the major Oradour trial, 43 members of the 3rd Company /
"DF" were sentenced to death in absentia, most of whom had been killed in heavy fighting on the Normandy front and in subsequent battles until the end of the war. Two non-commissioned officers were sentenced to death in their presence, but were later pardoned and released after several years.
Incidentally, the fighting in the Tulle-Oradour area, which must be regarded as a single complex, claimed at least 141 lives on the German side. To date, no member of the French Maquis has been convicted of murdering German soldiers.

From 1944 to the present day, there have been a whole series of cases where entire villages have been destroyed and the entire population, including women and children, exterminated, as in Algiers, Indochina, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Lebanon, etc. There is not a single known case in which an international military tribunal, such as the one established in Nuremberg, has dealt with such matters, let alone passed judgment.
Even though immediately after the war the words "Vae
victis! — Woe to the vanquished!" rang out, the
victors have always been the victors.
was still valid, where passions were still stirred up by the struggle, the French side should finally draw a line under this truly Franco-German tragedy, in view of the historical reconciliation between our two peoples.
The trial against former Obersturmführer Heinz Barth, which took place in East Berlin in the spring of 1983, can only be described—40 years later—as a belated show trial by an Eastern regime, to which the French ambassador

in the GDR, as well as residents of Oradour and Lidice/Czechoslovakia, were summoned as witnesses and spectators.

It must give pause for thought that, contrary to all previous experience in Western courts, the defendant constantly incriminated himself by repeating almost word for word the accusations made against him by the public prosecutor, which were then recorded in the minutes as a full confession.

However, this trial will be commented on elsewhere.

Here, documentation of this German-French tragedy in Tulle and Oradour is presented from the German perspective. It has been compiled to the best of our knowledge and belief and has already been published in the division history DIVISION DAS REICH — Volume V — Munin-Verlag, Osnabrück 1982.

The files on Tulle and Oradour are locked away in French archives until well beyond the year 2000 — certainly not without reason.

This documentation is intended to contribute to the victory of German-French reconciliation, historical truth, and justice.

Otto Weidinger

T U LL E and 0 R A D 0 U R
9 and 10 June 1944

The Allied invasion has been successful.

Werner Haupt writes: *)

"As the evening of D-Day descended on the bleeding land of Normandy with its burning towns and villages, the landings of General Bradley's 1st US Army and General Dempsey's 2nd British Army were successful and complete!

The Allied Navy's transport ships had not only brought thousands of soldiers to the coast, but had also unloaded 8,900 vehicles of all kinds — including the heaviest combat vehicles — and 1,900 tons of equipment.

British troops had established themselves in an area 25 km wide and 10 km deep between the Orne and north of Ryes, while the Americans held a 15 km wide and 4 km deep section at the southeastern corner of the Cotentin Peninsula.

The Allies suffered 11,200 casualties, including dead, wounded, and missing. German losses amounted to 6,500 officers, non-commissioned officers, and enlisted men.

It had been a bloody day, June 6, 1944.

This "longest day" saw Allied troops land in Normandy, breaking into the European continent and marking the beginning of the end of the German Reich.

The hopeless battle of the German divisions against overwhelming odds and total Allied air superiority had begun.

But now back to southern France and the "Das Reich" division.

") Werner Haupt: "Retreat in the West," Motorbuchverlag Stuttgart

The division prepares to march.

June 7, 1944

In the early hours of the morning, the order "Alarm Level II" is given, meaning that the troops are to prepare for march. The prearranged requisition of motor vehicles from across the country is carried out.
During the night of the 7th/8th, the division units move to the advance route near the staging point.

> At 11:15 p.m., the following order is received from LVIII (58th) Panzer Corps:
> "Division 'Das Reich' is to assemble with operational units by 8 June in the evening in the Tulle-Limoges area.
> Upon arrival there, the division is to report to LXVI (66th) Corps."

This order is to be passed on to the troops as a preliminary order. The division requests that the OB-West arrange for tracked vehicles to be loaded into the current U-space as prepared.
At the end of May, at the suggestion of the SD chief in France and on the orders of OB-West, a simultaneous large-scale operation by the "Das Reich" division and the 17th SS Panzer Division "Götz von Berlichingen" was to take place to pacify the Dordogne department. This order was rejected by the divisions with the support of their immediate superiors, citing insufficient motorization and fuel supplies.
It is considered certain that OB-West wanted to carry out this action at the start of the invasion and therefore arranged for the division to assemble in the Dordogne department for transport to the Normandy front. A strange assembly point in the heart of the Maquisards' stronghold! The departure preparations had actually been agreed upon beforehand for the Bordeaux area and arrangements had even been made with the railway authorities, who had had special loading ramps built for this purpose.

The situation on the invasion front.

Starting on June 7, 2,000 vehicles and 12,000 tons of material are landed daily via Arromanches; later, a pipeline is built through the channel directly to the beach, transporting 4.5 million liters of gasoline per day.
In June, two German armies with 29 infantry divisions and six tank divisions are still standing idle in northern France and Belgium — not yet deployed.

The division marches off.

At 4:00 a.m., the following written division order is issued: 2nd SS

Panzer Division	Div.Gel.St., June 8, 1944
"The Reich"	4:00
Ia/No. 750/44 geh.	Secret

Division order for fighting gangs in the Tulle–Limoges area

1.) The gang situation in the Massif Central has intensified considerably. Immediate and ruthless action by strong forces is ordered.

2.) The 2nd SS Panzer Division is being transferred to the Tulle-Limoges area. To this end, in the early hours of April 8, 1944, the tank battle group will depart from its current U-area in accordance with the troop divisions listed in Appendix 1 and take up two march routes. Route A : Villefranche — Figeac — Tulle, Route B: Caussade — Cahors — Brive — Limoges.

3.) Upon arrival in the Tulle-Limoges area, the tank battle group will take up wartime local quarters in accordance with Appendix 2.

4.) The remaining parts of the division will take over the tasks in accordance with the division order for deployment in the event of an invasion. All remaining units will be placed under the command of SS-Ostubaf. Wisliceny. The remaining parts of the units that have moved out will be designated "Nachkommando" (rear guard). It is to be expected that the remaining parts of the tank battle group will follow in the near future.

5) **All marches and accommodations** are to be secured in accordance with wartime regulations. Special arrangements are to be made for the protection of vehicles that break down. Marches and guards with less than platoon strength are prohibited.

6.) **In the event of enemy resistance**, ruthless action is to be taken. Attacks on the uninvolved civilian population (especially looting) are to be prevented by all means.
In the course of combat operations, motor vehicles and fuel supplies in particular are to be confiscated and used to mobilize the troops, reporting to the division.

7.) Active and passive air defense must be maintained at all times. It is entirely possible that the Allies will deploy airborne troops to reinforce the gangs.

8) Reports:

a) Readiness to march is to be reported by telephone and by an orderly officer. The orderly officer is to report the structure, strength, equipment, number of vehicles, and length of the march, etc. He will then be released back to the troops as a liaison officer.

b) Arrival at the assigned locations.

9.) **Traffic control:** by Montauban through the field police company, otherwise by the troops.

10.) **Communications:**

a) Radio and within the armored combat group according to the radio schedule.

b) Radio and, if possible, telex communication between the staff/armored combat group and the division's follow-up command is provided by the armored reconnaissance unit.

c) **Radio silence is to be maintained until further orders after leaving the underground room.**

11.) **Command posts:**

a) Pz.Rgt.: Tulle

b) Panzer Grenadier Regiment "DF": Limoges

c) Artillery Regiment: Uzerche
d) Pz.AA: Ussel

12.) **Division command posts:**
a) On the march: March route B
b) Tulle
c) Reinforcement command Division staff remains in Montauban.

For the division command:
The 1st General Staff Officer
signed S t ü c k l e r

Appendix to the division order for counterinsurgency in the Tulle–Limoges area

Troop deployment
(not order of march)

a) On march route A:
Pz.Rgt.
Pi. Group Schmelzer
(to be transferred to St.Cere. Contact will be established by Pz.Rgt.)

b) On route B:
1) Marching group Pz.Gen.Rgt. "DF" with parts of NA (Nachr. Abt.)
2) Marching group Art.Rgt. with division staff and remainder of Pi.BtI.
3) Marching group Germany, I./Germany, Sturmgesch. Abt., Flak-Abt.
4) Marching group supply services: 2 columns Div.Nachsch. Tr., San.Abt.

Advance on march route B: Pz.AA with VP (division advance personnel).

c) The march group leaders regulate the merging and march sequence.
d) Lighting level: night marching equipment
e) A sufficient number of maps are handed out to the officers in accordance with point 8.
f) The order to leave the underground rooms will be given by radio once the march is ready to begin.

Appendix 2 to the division order for counterinsurgency in the Tulle–Limoges area

Accommodation overview in the new underground room

1) Division staff with NA (Nachr.Abt.): in the Tulle area
2) Pz.Rgt.: in the St. Fortunade — Egletons — Seilhac area
3) Pz.Gren.Rgt. "DF": in the area:
   Limoges — St. Leonard — Ambazac — Nieul
4) Pz.Art.Rgt.: in the area of Uzerche — Meilhards — Masseret
5) I./Germany: in the Pierre — Buffiere area
6) Pz.AA: in the area of Ussel — Eygurande — Meymac
7) Stu.Gesch.Abt.: in the area of Pz.Gren.Rgt. "DF"
8) Flak-Abt secures the Pz.Rgt against air threats
9) Pi.Btl.: in the Eymoutiers — Dachelle area
10) Supply services: in the Brive — Donzenao area (San.Abt. ensures that local military hospitals in Tulle and Limoges are ready to receive casualties).

The division's request to load the chain parts is rejected — a decision that is incomprehensible given the long journey to Normandy, especially for the tanks and half-track vehicles.

The follow-up order.

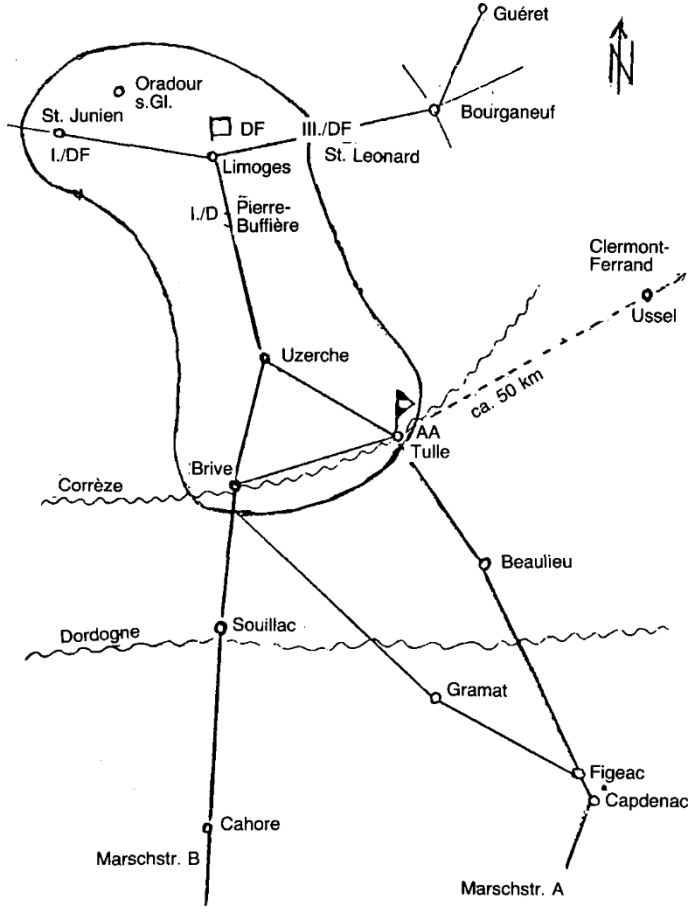
Unserviceable parts remain under the command of Ostubaf. Wisliceny (Kdr.Pz.Gren.Rgt. 3 "Deutschland") in their previous quarters and continue to be assigned to LVIII. (58.) Pz.Korps, namely:

Staff and Staff Company "D," II./D, III./D, 14./D, 16./D, II./DF,
1. Pz.AA "DR" (Pz.Sp.Kp.)
1 company: Panzer Engineer Battalion "DR"
Field Replacement Battalion
1 signal column

Supply services for the rear command

March on June 8, 1944
Accommodation area from June 8 to 12, 1944

A sketch by Divisions-la Stückler illustrates the geographical location and route of the march.



Taken and supplemented from: Herbert Taege: "Wo ist Kain?"
— Revelations and documents on the Tulle and Oradour complex
ASKANIA-Verlag, Lindhorst 1981

The march

At 8:00 a.m., radio orders are issued to the marching groups to assemble. The Pz.Gren.Rgt. "DF" is the first marching group to set off, together with parts of the signals unit, advancing along National Road 20 via Cahors, Souillac, Brive, and Uzerche to Limoges. Since the Pz.AA 2, which was supposed to march as the advance guard, was unable to assemble in time, the regiment marches at the head of the division. The remaining marching groups follow in the planned order.

The "DF" regiment marched in the following formation: 15th
(Motorcycle) Company
Regimental Staff and Signal
Platoon 16th (Pi.) Company
13th (Infantry Gun) Company III
(gep.)/DF
I./DF

At noon, the left marching group of the division reaches the Dordogne section. A longer break is taken. The right marching group is still lagging behind. The march proceeds according to plan until the afternoon. In the towns and villages that the regiment passes through, security measures in the form of roadblocks and barriers have already been put in place by the German local commanders. There is a strange tension in the air. The members of the local command, who have been isolated since the beginning of the invasion, greet the German tank division joyfully and breathe a sigh of relief.
There is still no sign of resistance from the Maquis. In beautiful summer weather, the march continues in the early afternoon.
Since the left flank of the division is not secured, the I./DF between Cahors and Souillac turns west off the march route and marches as the left flank column on national roads 701 and 7Ö3 toward Limoges.
The regimental commander, Standartenführer Stadler, has been driving at the head of the regiment since the start of the march. Around 5 p.m., the situation becomes more tense. There are no civilians to be seen

on the road. The villages are deserted. The terrain becomes hillier and more confusing.

The first resistance.

Shortly after the regimental commander ordered a motorcycle platoon from the 15th Company under Ustuf.Winkler to take the lead, shots were suddenly heard. The platoon had driven around a bend and come upon a guarded roadblock. A firefight broke out immediately. The resistance is only slight and is quickly broken. The area around the group of houses where the roadblock was set up is searched and the roadblock is removed. To the right, ahead on the road, armed civilians can be seen fleeing into a wooded area some distance away. In the next village, a shed is on fire, probably a signal to other resistance groups. The Noailles farmstead, where the first resistance began, is located about 8 km south of Brive. From this point on, the march continues with the reconnaissance unit, which has now arrived, at the front.
Shortly thereafter, it removes another unmanned roadblock.
. At around 6:30 p.m., the front of the division reaches Brive. The right marching group — the Panzer regiment — takes up position in the Beaulieu area.

The order is given to fight to free the garrison of Tulle.

In Brive, the field commander there informs the division commander that he has no outside communication, that he is forced to stand by and watch the Maquisards round up young Frenchmen in Brive, and that fierce fighting is underway in Tulle between the battalion of Security Regiment 95 (Army) stationed there and the Maquisards. The division commander receives orders from the LXVI (66th) Res.A.K. via the garrison commander to fight to free the German garrison—the III.Btl./Sich.Rgt.95—which is surrounded by strong Maquis forces.
To this end, the division deploys the Pz.AufkI.Abt. to Tulle; the Div. Führungsstaffel also follows there.

Halfway there, the unit comes under fire from a railway tunnel, which is returned. Against
At 9:00 p.m., the unit reaches the outskirts of Tulle. From this point on, the Pz.AufkI.Abt. is involved in heavy fighting for Tulle. Some of the German garrison can be freed at the last minute, but nine members of the unit are killed and several wounded.
On the left flank, the III (gep.)/DF from Brive takes over the lead of the marching group, which continues its march into the Limoges area during the night. Along the way, several unguarded roadblocks have to be cleared. The division command post is located in Tulle.

9. June 1944

At around 2:00 a.m., the front of the "DF" marching group reaches Limoges, where the regimental commander immediately seeks out the local commander and is briefed on the situation in the Limoges area.
The regiment is greeted with great relief by the German authorities in the city. They have been cut off from the outside world for two days. No vehicle has been able to get in or out of the city due to the blockade set up by the Maquisards. There is talk among the civilian population that a concentrated attack by the Maquis on the city is imminent. All Germans hope that the regiment will remain as long as possible.
The regiment command post is being moved to the Hotel Centrale in the city center. The commanders and company commanders are being assigned to the following accommodations:
Regimental staff and regimental units: Limoges
III.(gep.)/DF: area around St. Leonard de Noblat east of Limoges,
I./DF: area around St. Junien north and northwest of Limoges.
After many obstacles and an exhausting march, I./DF under the command of Sturmbannführer Diekmann arrives in Limoges in the morning hours of June 9 and, after being assigned to its accommodation in St. Julien, I./D (which is placed under the command of Rgt.DF upon completion of the march) marches to the Pierre-Buffiere area.

During its march on the left flank of the division, the I./DF had several firefights with Maquisards. Its route took it via Gourdon, Payrac, Groleyac, Carsac, Calviac, Carlux, and Peyrillac, where it rejoined National Road 20. The first casualties had been suffered. Several tree barriers had to be removed.
The "Das Reich" division, provisionally assigned to the LXVI (66th) Res.A.K., was ordered to conduct combat reconnaissance in the Brive-Ussel — Gueret — St. Junien — Châlus area and fight to free encircled German troops and staffs. The troops are being dispersed from their quarters. The units not in action have been ordered to repair the vehicles.
In the early hours of June 10, Obersturmführer Gerlach, adjutant of Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 2 "Das Reich," arrives at the regimental command post in a completely exhausted state, wearing only his undergarments, and reports his experiences to the regimental commander.
He had this report recorded before the Hamburg magistrate Dr. Meyerdress, the lawyer Dr. Walters (defense attorney in the Oradour trial), a British captain, and a French captain, which is reproduced below in its entirety:

The report of Obersturmführer Gerlach.

"The regiment had arrived in Limoges during the night of June 8/9, 1944, coming from the south of France.
On the morning of June 9, I received orders from Regimental Commander Stadler in Limoges to find quarters for the assault gun battalion in the Nieul area. He showed me the map and warned me about the resistance fighters operating in that area.
I then drove to Nieul with six men in three cars. We found accommodation there, but as there was not enough room, we drove to neighboring towns using a map. My car was faster than the other two vehicles. I therefore had to stop soon and, as they had not followed me, turn back to find them.

After a short drive, I was suddenly stopped on an open road by a truck, and I saw military uniforms. At first, I thought they were friends, because we had been told that Frenchmen in militia uniforms were fighting on our side. Before I could think any further, let alone make use of my submachine gun, seven or eight uniformed men jumped out of the truck, pointed their weapons at us, and came toward my car shouting and demanding, "Hands up!" They dragged my driver and me out of the car, tore our uniforms off our bodies, hit us in the face, and said in no uncertain terms: "SS—destroy them immediately!"

We were only wearing our underwear. In this state, they pushed us off the car and into some bushes. I was convinced that they were going to shoot us, so I tried once more to speak and explain myself, first to the leader, a tall, slim man in his early thirties wearing a militia uniform. But he just said, as if he didn't understand me at all: "No SS! SS — kaputt!" So I spoke to a younger man who spoke relatively good German, apparently an Alsatian, who seemed to feel sorry for us. But that didn't help either. I then explained that I was an orderly officer in the division and that I could provide important information if they took me to their Maquis leader. That seemed to impress the Alsatian; he translated it for his superior. He looked at me and said something, but I didn't understand.

My driver and I were dragged back to the car, forced to get back in, and driven away under guard. After a while, I saw some road signs that helped me get my bearings, then a sign at the entrance to a village that read: Oradour-sur-Glane. We stopped on the main street of Oradour-sur-Glane. We had to get out. We were surrounded by members of the Maquis and many curious onlookers. I saw many people in uniform, including women wearing yellow leather jackets and steel helmets. The population became more and more threatening by the minute. That's why one of the men in uniform let us go again.

put us on the truck. I saw ropes being taken out of a barn next to a bakery on the main street of Oradour-sur-Giane. My driver and I were taken off the truck again and tied up with the ropes. We were tied so that both arms were tied behind our backs, and the knot was secured with wire. We stood like that for about 45 minutes. Then French civilians arrived on a tandem bicycle. They spoke to the population. We then had to get back into the truck.

The men who had captured us also got into the truck and stayed with us as guards. We drove away from Oradour-sur-Giane, with the tandem bike in front, acting as a security escort and signaling continuously from a distance of about a hundred meters. On the way, we stopped for the first time in front of a house with a telephone sign on the front. The two civilians on the tandem phone called from there. They returned to the truck and then gave the leader of the escort a statement in French, which I did not understand.

We then turned left off the main road into an undeveloped area. After another three or four kilometers, we were dropped off at a field guard post. Our shackles were removed and we were given something to eat. In the meantime, the truck with the escort had driven away; it returned after about two or three hours. After we were shackled again, we had to get back into the truck.

We drove about eight to ten kilometers to a forest clearing

, at the corner of which stood a milestone marked "6.5 km to Bellac." We turned off the road into this forest clearing and, about three hundred meters further on, came across a French truck marked with a tricolor flag.

Here we were dragged out of the car and severely mistreated. We were taken to a young member of the Maquis, apparently the commander of the post. He wore a blue uniform.

We were not interrogated; he just shouted at us: "SS, no interrogation, break them immediately!" The young Alsatian, one of the guards...

ner wanted to object, but he was rudely rebuffed by the commander. The commander then called over some Frenchmen who were also wearing blue uniforms and, as far as I could understand from their gestures and movements, gave them the order to lead us into the forest and shoot us. My driver recognized the situation clearly, so he resisted and refused to go with them; the Frenchmen standing around us rushed at him in a rage and fell upon him. I seized this moment to quickly run ahead into the nearby forest and the bushes. I ran as fast as I could, because my life was at stake. I heard shots; I turned around and saw my driver collapse. I rushed forward, seeking shelter behind trees and bushes. They pursued me and shouted after me, some shots whizzed past my head. I kept changing direction. Thanks to these deceptions and under the cover of dusk, I managed to escape.

Since I had studied the map carefully before leaving Limoges
, I knew that I had to reach the Bellac-Limoges railway line. I managed to do so, and the next morning, on June 10, I arrived at the command post in Limoges.

I reported to Regimental Commander Stadler and described what had happened. He told me that I was not the only one who had been attacked and kidnapped the day before. He told me about the commander of the III Battalion, "Der Führer," named Kämpfe, who had not yet returned and was probably killed. The regiment commander ordered me to get some sleep, as difficult marches still lay ahead.

When I got back up, the commander of the 1st Battalion, "Der Führer," Diekmann, made me show him on the map where I had been captured and the route taken to where my driver had been shot. He soon left with the 3rd Company under the command of Captain Kahn, bound for Oradour-sur-Glane...

The events in Tulle

A horrific massacre of German " " soldiers.

On June 9, 1944, during the recapture of the town of Tulle by Pz.Aufkl.Abt.2 "Das Reich," the bodies of at least 40 German soldiers of III.BtI./Sicherungs-Rgt. 95 were found in front of their quarters, a former school, horribly mutilated and brutally murdered. According to eyewitness reports from residents of the town, the German soldiers had surrendered to the Maquisards when they set fire to the school. They had laid down their weapons and came out with their hands raised. However, they were shot in front of the building. Dead German soldiers without weapons lay in piles on the street; only one SD member, lying among other corpses on a staircase, had a pistol in his hand. Several rifles lay broken at the gate exit. A group of about eight dead soldiers lay completely tangled up on and under a truck. There were also several dead members of the German battalion in the hollow of the building. It could not be determined whether and how many bodies were still lying under the rubble of the school. According to the security battalion, 80 men were missing. More dead bodies were recovered during the course of the day. The total number of dead German soldiers found in Tulle by June 10, 1944, was 64. This number is authentic. The dead of the Pz.Aufkl.Abt. from June 8 and 9—nine dead—are not included in this number. This brought the total number of dead German soldiers to 73. Some were still wearing gas masks, apparently as protection against the smoke from the burning school. Residents of Tulle reported that the Maquisards, who included Poles, Red Spaniards, and even four Russians in uniform, had run over German soldiers who were still alive with trucks. Some of the bodies were mutilated beyond recognition and could not be identified. One of the dead was found to have had both heels pierced and a rope pulled through the tendons. He had apparently been killed in this manner while being transported in the truck.

had been dragged, hence the horrific facial injuries. The dead had multiple gunshot wounds, mostly in the back and the back of the head.

According to eyewitness reports from a local resident, female companions of the Maquisards had defiled the bodies of the German soldiers with feces. After the massacre, a gruesome orgy was apparently celebrated, as evidenced by broken wine bottles, during which the drunken Maquisards "played soccer" with German steel helmets. Some of the dead had their genitals cut off and stuffed into their mouths.

"Ten or twelve German soldiers had also been shot at the cemetery wall in Tulle, as two French clergymen later testified before the Permanent High Military Court in Bordeaux."

This massacre was carried out on June 7 by the Maquisards, even though an abbé had pointed out the irregularity of their actions.

The mutilated bodies were examined by the surgeon of the medical company "Das Reich," Stubaf. Dr. Roschmann, by the division doctor, Stubaf. Dr. Priebe, and by the doctor of Security Battalion 95. The mutilations were recorded and photographed by the division's ic, Hstuf. Kowatsch. The report was submitted by the division to the LXVI (66th) Reserve Corps as a special incident.

Weapons and ammunition of English origin were found in a French police camp. It was learned that the police chief of Tulle and a garage mechanic were on the side of the Maquisards.

For security reasons, all men found in Tulle were initially detained in the courtyard of the ammunition factory. With the assistance of the mayor, administrative officials from the prefecture, and the head of the ammunition factory, the men who were not from the area and were considered suspicious were interrogated by the ic, Hstuf.

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*) Dr. jur. Hans Luther: "The French Resistance against the German Occupying Power and its Suppression,"
pages 76-78 — Institute for Occupation Issues, Tübingen.

Kowatsch. All the others were released during the course of the day.
According to the German command authorities and based on information provided by the French local authorities, the Maquisards in Tulle were communist gangs consisting mainly of Spanish Republicans, Poles, and French communists who also terrorized the population and were ultimately responsible for the crimes committed against German soldiers. For this reason, the German authorities issued a call to the civilian population of Tulle to cooperate legally in the fight against the "common enemy."

Of those suspected of involvement in this crime, 120 were selected to be hanged by summary execution in accordance with international law as punishment for the murder of 64 German soldiers.
These were not "hostages," but guerrilla fighters who were already doomed to death under the 1940 armistice agreement, which was valid under international law. Only the manner of death was therefore repressive in nature. Moreover, a state of emergency had been in force since June 8, 1944, and the corps had ordered the reprisal.

However, thanks to intercession, several other young Frenchmen were spared from execution.
This is reported, among other places, in "Histoire pour tous" from October 1967: ")
"A young SS soldier delivers a message to SD officer Walter, who is in charge of selecting the 120 men to be hanged. As the young soldier passes by the group of men awaiting death, he is approached by a young man from the group. The Frenchman tries to persuade the German soldier to ask the SD lieutenant for mercy for him. What happens next is described as follows:

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*) Sadi Schneid: "SS-Beutedeutscher — Weg und Wandlung eines Elsässers" (SS Booty Germans — The Path and Transformation of an Alsatian), ASKANIA-Verlag, Lindhorst 1979, page 7

"With a shaken face, the soldier takes him by the arm and leads him to Walter. Walter nods in agreement. The two young men, one wearing a helmet, boots, and armed, the other in work clothes, embrace each other and weep. Abbé Espinasse approaches Walter, who seems moved. "What this soldier has done should not surprise you," says Walter, as if to excuse his gesture, "he is an Alsatian."

The same Alsatian, Sadi Schneid, has saved another young Frenchman from the noose.

In the end, 99 suspects remained. The execution was carried out by Ic, Hstuf.Kowatsch, who was provided with a pioneer unit from the Pz.AufkI.Abt. It took place between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

The method of execution by hanging was chosen because the Maquisards, through their vicious fighting tactics, had killed, tortured, mutilated, and desecrated an enemy who was protected by the Geneva Convention and international law, as well as by the German-French armistice agreement of 1940, and who had surrendered. In doing so, they placed themselves outside the laws of war and humanity. In the German view, this meant that execution by shooting was out of the question. Execution by hanging was also intended to have a deterrent effect on the Maquisards and the population.

At the request of the elderly Bishop of Tulle, who spoke to the division command post, the terrorists were granted spiritual assistance before their execution and a Christian burial, which took place afterwards in the cemetery.

On the same day—June 9, 1944—the regiment "DF" in Limoges received the following order from the LXVI (66th) Res.A.K. on the orders of Sturmbannführer Kämpfe: III.(gep.)/DF under Sturmbannführer Kämpfe, on orders from the LXVI.(66.) Res.A.K., was ordered to reach the town of Gueret, about 60 km northeast of its quarters, and liberate the German garrison surrounded there by Maquisards.

Due to the considerable distances to the battalions and the heavily indented, hilly, and wooded terrain

, radio contact with the battalions cannot be established, so that they must operate largely independently on the basis of their orders. Since individual motorcycle couriers and other single vehicles can no longer be used due to attacks by the Maquisards, contact can only be maintained by heavily armed orderly officers with SPW (armored personnel carriers) or in groups of several vehicles. As a result, the regiment receives only sparse reports.

The deployment of the 3rd Battalion (reconnaissance) of the 3rd Division (reconnaissance) ( ).

During the night of June 9/10, the regimental doctor of the III./DF, Obersturmführer Dr. Müller, arrives at the regimental command post in his SPW with several men and brings bad news:

Sturmbannführer Kämpfe has fallen into the hands of the terrorists.

He also reports on the events of June 9 at III./DF:

Gueret had been occupied by Maquisards on June 7, and the entire staff of the local command headquarters had been taken prisoner.
On June 8, a German army unit coming from the direction of Montluçon had already attempted to liberate the town, but had been held up by strong resistance from the Maquisards entrenched in the houses.
On June 9, the attack continued from the east, supported by aircraft, while the III./DF advanced on Gueret from the opposite direction.
The battalion had set out around noon and, before reaching the city, encountered two oncoming trucks with armed French soldiers in the cabs in dense forest on a winding road. They immediately opened fire. The group leader of the first armored personnel carrier was seriously wounded by a shot to the head.
The first vehicles of the III./DF immediately opened fire from all barrels. Tragically, it later transpired that the occupants of the trucks were Germans —

staff assistants, army officers and civil servants, and a few soldiers who were obviously being transported westward from the city, which had been liberated from the east in the meantime. One or two Germans were killed, and a French woman in German service was wounded by a shot to the stomach. The remaining wounded suffered relatively minor injuries, and several were unharmed.
When the first parts of the battalion reached the outskirts of Gueret, the town was already back in the hands of German troops. By sunset, the battalion had gathered in a village outside Gueret. The seriously wounded French woman was taken to the local hospital. Sturmbannführer Kämpfe ordered Obersturmführer Dr. Müller to drive the wounded to the barracks with the medical unit. As he drove off in his SPW, he was overtaken by
8:00 p.m. Stubaf. Kämpfe, alone at the wheel of a fast Talbot, waved to him and sped off.
He had driven ahead of the marching column to express his gratitude to the mayor of a village located along the battalion's route for having a destroyed bridge repaired during the day on Kämpfe's orders.

Sturmbannführer Kämpfe had disappeared .

After a few minutes—it had grown dusky in the meantime—Dr. Müller found his commander's empty car at the edge of the forest, the engine running and the door open. An empty MPi magazine lay under the car. There were no signs of a struggle or blood.
About ten minutes later, the front of the battalion arrived. The adjutant riding at the front, Ostuf. Weyrauch, ordered a search of the forest despite the approaching darkness and sent Ostuf. Dr. Müller to Limoges to report to the regiment. Radio contact could not be established. All searches were in vain. The fighters remained missing.
Ostuf. Manz temporarily took command of III./DF. The news of the abduction of the outstanding and all-

The widely popular commander's disappearance caused outrage and bitterness throughout the regiment. His disappearance was a heavy loss for the regiment and the division, both from a military and a human perspective, as he was one of the SPW specialists and the commander of the only SPW battalion in the division. All units were informed of this case and instructed to conduct investigations in their areas of accommodation, but these were all unsuccessful.
Meanwhile, the SD office in Limoges informed the regiment that, according to reports from their French contacts in Oradour-sur-Giane, there was a Maquis command post in the area.

In the evening, Stubaf. Weidinger, who had been assigned to the "DF" regimental staff for information services, received orders from Staf. Stadler to drive to the division staff in Tulle with a motorcycle escort and deliver the report of Stubaf. Kämpfe's disappearance and important supply reports. He was also to give a verbal account of the situation at the "DF" regiment. The trip had become necessary because radio contact had been interrupted due to the great distance and the rugged terrain.
The nighttime journey of approximately 130 km through partisan-infested terrain was surprisingly uneventful. The motorcycle platoon reached Tulle at around 12:30 a.m.

At the divisional headquarters, Stubaf. Weidinger also learned the reason for the sudden "restraint" of the terrorists. It lay in the events of June 8 and 9 in Tulle, where, as already described, 99 Frenchmen suspected of the brutal murder of at least 64 German soldiers were hanged by summary execution as atonement. This had obviously caused a general shock among the terrorist Maquisards, which was indeed the intention.
If the Maquisards were convinced that they were fighting for the liberation of France from German occupation, then they had to expect that such a struggle would cost them heavy sacrifices. For the German leadership, it was self-evident that they would use all means necessary to protect the lives of the soldiers entrusted to them against acts that violated international law and

The brutal fighting tactics of the Maquisards had to be met with punitive and deterrent countermeasures.
As it later became known, on June 9 or 10, 1944, in a small forest near Naves (about 10 km north of Tulle), 62 more German soldiers, including medical and railway personnel, fell into the hands of the terrorists. They were also shot and buried. Their graves have not been found to this day.
This brought the number of Germans murdered in the Tulle area to at least 126, and with the deaths of the Aufkl.Abt., to 135.
In the fall of 1944, an Allied radio station reported on the Tulle case that the French Resistance had hanged German members of a "gendarmerie company" in Tulle in retaliation for the executions of June 9, 1944. (The fact of the report is certain. However, the details about the radio station and the exact date of the report can no longer be clearly established. The report was intercepted by the division's intelligence service at the time.
In several other places, encircled German commandos were freed before they fell into the hands of the Maquisards.
There were several more deaths in the division, including four men from a field gendarmerie unit. When the breastplates of the field gendarmerie were found in a stopped car with Maquisards in Uzerche, which one of these men had kept as a "souvenir," he was hanged in Uzerche on the orders of the division commander, who was with the artillery regiment at the time. The two other Maquisards were handed over to the security police.
The right-hand marching group A (Panzer Regiment and Schmelzer Pioneer Battalion) reached their quarters in the division area near Tulle in the evening.

10. June 1944:

At around 6:00 a.m., Stubaf. Weidinger arrived back in Limoges with the motorcycle platoon without incident. On the way back, he encountered a convoy of trucks from the division carrying men from the French labor service. It was a closed unit of about 400 men with a major as commander and three other officers as company commanders. They had initially been suspected of collaborating with the Maquis, captured, and were being transported to Limoges to the "DF" regiment. Since all available men from the regimental staff were deployed, they were guarded by soldiers from the army base command in a gymnasium upon their arrival.

A trace of 's battles!

The search for Stubaf. Kämpfe was now in full swing. In the early hours of the morning, a motorcycle messenger found Kämpfe's personal papers on the main road in the center of Limoges and handed them over to the regiment. This led to the conclusion that Kämpfe had been transported through the city by the Maquisards in a vehicle during the night to another location. He had probably managed to throw his personal papers out of the car during the drive through the city in order to leave a clue as to his whereabouts.

A new report about Oradour-sur-Giane.

During the morning, the commander of the I./DF, Stubaf Diekmann, arrives at the regimental command post and reports the following:
In St. Junien—his quarters—two French civilians came to him and reported that a senior German officer was being held captive by the Maquisards in the village of Oradour-sur-Giane. He was to be publicly executed and burned on the evening of the same day as part of a ceremony. The entire population of Oradour-sur-Glane was working with the Maquis. A senior Maquis staff was in the village. The same

The SD office in Limoges had also learned of this through French informants and reported it.
The regimental staff believes that the senior German officer must have been killed in action, as there were no further reports of the capture of a senior German officer.
Stubaf Diekmann therefore asks Standartenführer Stadler to allow him to immediately drive there with a company to free the fighters, who were, incidentally, his personal friends. Stadler then informs Diekmann about Gerlach's experience in Oradour-sur-Giane and about the report from the SD limousine, which confirmed his own report. This is the third time in a short period that the name Oradour-sur-Giane appears in reports about the Maquisards.
Stadler approves this mission, but with the additional order that Stubaf. Diekmann should try under all circumstances to secure Kämpfe's release through negotiations and, if this does not succeed, to occupy the village and free Kämpfe. If Kämpfe cannot be found, it is important to take numerous prisoners—preferably Maquis leaders—in order to have enough prisoners for a new exchange offer.
Ostuf. Gerlach, who is still with the regiment, is summoned and gives Diekmann precise instructions based on the map. This conclusively refutes the claim by the Maquisards that Oradour-sur-Giane had been confused with another Oradour.
Diekmann then leaves to carry out his mission.
It should be expressly stated at this point, as the former Ostubaf Weidinger also stated on record before the Permanent High Military Court in Bordeaux, that neither the regimental commander Lammerding nor any other German army or police authority ever gave an order to carry out mass executions in Oradour-sur-Glan and set the village on fire, as has been repeatedly claimed in French publications.

The orders for fighting gangs.

Since January 3, 1944, the order to combat gangs, known as the "Sperrte-Befehl" (blockade order), had been in force in France. It reads in part:

1) "The disregard for the civilian population is almost unparalleled... We are not in the occupied western territories to allow our troops to be shot or abducted by saboteurs with impunity. Despite their undeniable success, the countermeasures taken so far will not significantly change the situation if immediate self-defense **is** not **resorted** to in the event of attacks and insubordination**.**

2) To this end, I order: ...If a unit is attacked in any way..., the commander is obliged to take **immediate** independent countermeasures on his own initiative.
   These include:
   a) Return fire immediately! If innocent persons are hit, this is regrettable, but the fault lies **solely** with the terrorists.
   b) Immediate **cordoning off** of the area around the scene of the crime and detention of all civilians in the vicinity, regardless of their status or identity.
   c) Immediate **burning** of houses from which shots have been fired.
   Only after these or similar immediate measures have been taken should the report be made.

4) When assessing the actions of energetic troop commanders, the **decisiveness and speed** of their actions must be given **top priority** under all circumstances. Only weak and indecisive troop commanders must be severely punished, because they endanger the safety of their subordinate troops and the respect for the German Armed Forces.
   In view of the current situation, overly harsh measures cannot be grounds for punishment."

Signed Sperrle

And on June 8, 1944, OB-West ordered via LXVI (66) Res.A.K., which was communicated to the troops in the form of a daily order:

> "The WFST (Wehrmacht Command Staff) has expressed its expectation that the gangs in southern France will be dealt with extremely harshly and without leniency. The ongoing unrest in this area must finally be quelled. The outcome of this operation is of utmost importance for further developments in the West. Half-hearted measures will not suffice. The resistance forces must be crushed with swift and comprehensive action. The harshest measures must be taken to restore peace and security, to deter the inhabitants of these permanently contaminated areas, who must finally lose the desire to take in resistance groups and allow themselves to be ruled by them, and to set a warning example for the entire population.
> Ruthless severity at this critical moment is essential to eliminate the danger behind the fighting troops and to prevent greater bloodshed among the troops and the civilian population in the future."

This order came from the Wehrmacht High Command, i.e., from the highest military authority.

Also on June 6, 1944, the OB-West continued: "

> "The OKW has decided: Members of the French resistance movement are to be treated as guerrilla fighters."

These orders clearly prove that the "Das Reich" division acted exclusively within the framework of the superior army and Wehrmacht authorities and did not march through France as a "murdering and pillaging monster," as was often described in post-war Resistance literature.

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*) ibid. Dr. jur. Hans Luther: page 247

Measures to rescue Sturmbannführer Kämpfe

Due to the terrain and distance, no radio contact can be established with Stubaf. Diekmann throughout the day.
In the late morning, the division's O 3 (orderly officer to the enemy intelligence officer), Ostuf. Dr. Wache, arrives at the regiment to assist the regimental commander in the search for Kämpfe, which continues throughout the day.
At the same time, Stubaf. Weidinger contacts the commander of the security police in Limoges, Ostubaf. Meier, to exchange enemy intelligence and ask him to hand over a captured Maquis leader who is in the custody of the security police to the regimental commander.
Ostubaf. Meier immediately agrees to this and also promises to release another fifteen Maquisards if the fighting stops. Later, the number is increased to thirty. The Maquisard leader handed over to the regiment is taken to the command post , and the regimental commander makes him the following offer, with Ostuf. Dr. Wache acting as interpreter:

> "The release of 30 Maquisards, 40,000 francs ransom, and personal freedom for the negotiator in exchange for the release of Kämpfe."

Since the author had known the impeccable character of Standard Bearer Stadler for many years, it was obvious to him as a witness to this conversation that the regimental commander would keep his promise.
Stadler tried everything in his power during those days to secure Kämpfes' release and avoid unnecessary bloodshed. In this case, contrary to all other military customs and against the orders to take ruthless action against the Maquisards, he even used money to ensure that the negotiations were successful.

The Maquisards leader agreed to the offer and was taken by car to the outskirts of Limoges, where he was released by the last German security forces. In the late afternoon, he called again to report that he had not yet found his staff. Then nothing more was heard from him.
It was not until years later, during the Oradour trial in Bordeaux (January–March 1953), that it emerged that the negotiator had reached his Maquis staff and had presented Stadler's offer.
Canou, who had been captured during the fighting, testified at the trial that he had handed Kämpfe over to his "bosses."
His statement is reproduced in Le Monde of January 25/26, 1953, as follows:

"The Germans, Canou explained, seemed particularly fond of Major Kämpfe, because they tried to secure his release by offering to exchange him for 30 resistance fighters imprisoned in Limoges. Nothing came of it." And why did nothing come of it? Either Kämpfe was worth more to his "bosses" than the rescue of 30 Maquisards from German captivity, or, more likely, Kämpfe was no longer alive on the afternoon of June 10, which is why "nothing came of it."

Around noon, Ostuf Dr. Müller, battalion doctor of the III/DF, arrives in Limoges again with two SPWs and brings the staff assistants, officers, civil servants, and soldiers who were freed the previous evening to the regimental headquarters. The staff assistants complain bitterly about the cruel and cynical treatment they received from the Maquisards during their captivity in Gueret.
A man with a head wound has to be taken to the French hospital in Limoges because the division's field hospital is not in operation during the march to Normandy. Despite being operated on by a French doctor, he dies the same day.

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*) Herbert Taeke: "Wo ist Kain? — Enthüllungen und Dokumente zum Komplex Tulle und Oradour" (Where is Cain? — Revelations and documents on the Tulle and Oradour complex), ASKANIA-Verlag, Lindhorst, 1981, page 231.

The events in Oradour-sur-Giane .

In the late afternoon of June 10, Diekmann returns to the regiment and reports the following to the regimental commander:

He had traveled with the 3rd Company to Oradour-sur-Glane. The company had encountered resistance there. No fighting had been found during the occupation of the village. However, he had found several murdered German soldiers (Stückler report — in accordance with the findings of the court martial investigation). The population had taken part in the fighting. During the subsequent search of the houses, many weapons and ammunition were found. He then had all the male inhabitants of the village — about 180 — arrested and shot.

He had the houses in which weapons and ammunition were found set on fire. The church also caught fire and burned down in violent explosions.

Further investigations have since revealed that Diekmann concealed the deaths of women and children in his initial report. He denied that he had brought any captured Maquisards with him.

Standartenführer Stadler is extremely shocked by this report and says excitedly to Stubaf. Diekmann: "This could cost you dearly. I will immediately submit a report to the division court, which will result in a court martial investigation. I can't let this sit with the regiment."

He was particularly outraged that Diekmann had not obeyed his order to bring back captured Maquisard leaders. Deeply upset, he dismissed Diekmann and instructed him to write a detailed report on the events in Oradour-sur-Giane.

Diekmann did not defend himself, but obviously trusted that the existing orders would ensure a fair court martial.

Immediately after the arrival of the division commander, Brigadeführer Lammerding, Stadler reports the events in Oradour-sur-Glane and requests a court martial investigation against

Diekmann. He is assured that this will happen as soon as the situation allows.
There are still some clashes, fire attacks, and losses. Only in the I./D accommodation room is there complete calm. Following the incidents in Tulle and Oradour, the ic intercepts a radio message from a higher Maquis command stating that the fight against the "Das Reich" division is to be suspended until it has left central France. The resistance has become pointless in view of the great sacrifices it has demanded so far. The sacrifices are out of proportion to the success achieved.
In addition, a message from an enemy radio station is intercepted stating that Stubaf. Kämpfe has been shot in retaliation for the destruction of Oradour.
Much later, when the heavy defensive battles in Normandy were already well underway, the division received a complaint from the prefect of Limoges via the military commander of France about the incidents in Oradour. The division and the regiment had to comment on this. This was the first time that a French account of Oradour became known, according to which the entire population of the village had been killed.
For the sake of completeness, it should be mentioned here that members of the German security police told the author in the military prison in Bordeaux that the French resistance movement had suffered such a shock from Tulle and Oradour that it had been unable to act for weeks— a circumstance to which it was solely due that the 1st Army under Colonel General von Blaskowitz and all German services, totaling approximately 30,000 men, succeeded in joining Army Group B, which was retreating from Normandy, completely unchallenged by the Maquisards. Without this shock effect, German losses would have been much higher.

The French account of the case Kämpfe

The files of the Permanent Higher Military Court in Bordeaux report on Kämpfes' deportation:

"At dusk, Major Kämpfe, commander of the III Battalion, risked leading the marching column alone in a car. At La Bussiére, in the municipality of St. Leonard de Noblat, he was captured by several maquisards, including Sergeant Canou. Major Kämpfe was taken to the neighboring municipality of Cheyssous. His capture was to serve as a pretext for a whole series of reprisals.
The 3rd Battalion followed its commander at a distance of about ten minutes. After finding the abandoned car, the Germans, accompanied by several militiamen, searched the houses in the village and carried out reprisals.
Incidentally, Major Kämpfe was executed by the Maquisards as a result of the Oradour-sur-Glane massacre."

However, this version is not the only one. Other
"witnesses" reported that Kämpfe was shot while fleeing, others date Kämpfe's shooting to June 11, 1944, and others to a later date.

The grave of Sturmbannführer Kämpfe has been found.

Herbert Taege *) has determined the following:

"Kämpfe's gravestone was discovered by comrades at the war cemetery in Berneuil, about 100 km north of Bordeaux. It bears the inscription:

"HELMUT KÄMPFE STUBAF * 7/31/09 d. 10.6.44"

The German War Graves Commission confirmed the official date of death in a letter dated March 15, 1982.
10.6.44 and the exhumation of Kämpfes at the municipal cemetery in Breuilaufa. This location is 13 km northeast of Oradour-sur-Giane. However, it was not the original burial site.

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*) Author of the book: "Wo ist Kain?" (Where is Cain?), ASKANIA-Verlag, Lindhorst, in a report in "Der Freiwillige," Munin-Verlag, Osnabrück, No. 9/83

but a reburial from the district to the municipal cemetery together with four other unknown persons in about 1945.
The municipality of Breuilaufa, where the Volksbund found the remains, lies on the edge of the Blond mountains, where a maquis led by the Serr brothers had been active since 1943; it is the same place where the adjutant Gerlach was able to escape and where he saw his driver collapse under gunfire.
A year before the Oradour trial began in Bordeaux, the Permanent Military Court of Bordeaux informed the government commissioner for war graves that Sturmbannführer Kämpfe had been killed on June 10, 1944, in Cheyssous, but that nothing was known about the location of his grave.
This means that the same court which, one year later, heard the witnesses Hugonneaux and Lesieur, who claimed that Kämpfe had been shot on June 11, 1944, in retaliation, allowed these clearly false statements to stand unchallenged, even though it knew officially that Kämpfe had already been killed on
10 June. This official statement makes it clear why there could be no more fighting (even if the partisans had wanted it) and why the Bordeaux court files were then sealed for 100 years by law. For it is certain that the place of death given by the military court, Cheyssous, without knowing the location of the grave, reveals the trail of the murderer: The leader of the Maquis in Cheyssous was the mass murderer Guingouin, who held the title of colonel, and on June 10, 1944, the day of Kämpfes' death, he was in the Royal Forest of Blond, where Kämpfes' skeleton was officially exhumed and identified in 1963.

11. June 1944:

The division remains in its quarters in Brive–Tulle–Limoges with its mission unchanged.
As can be seen from the war diary of the LVIII (58th) Panzer Corps, the DAS REICH Division had been under the command of this Panzer Corps since
the evening of June 8, 1944, and remained under its command until

June 11, 1944. From that day on, the division came under the command of Army Group B. As expected, these missions to clean up the region and fight gangs were only an interlude on the march to the Normandy front. In the course of the morning, the order to continue the march via Poitiers-Tours to the area south of Le Mans at the disposal of AOK 7 arrived.
The division staff had meanwhile been transferred to Limoges.

's generous gesture

Under these circumstances, Standartenführer Stadler, on the suggestion of Stubaf. Weidinger, who had meanwhile visited the French labor service unit at their quarters and was convinced of the military discipline firmly in the hands of their officers, decided, in agreement with the division and the commander of the security police, to release the French labor service men who were still being held captive.
There is no evidence of cooperation with the Maquisards
. The regimental commander merely stipulates that the unit must be housed together in a barracks until the regiment departs.
On behalf of the commander, Stubaf. Weidinger meets with the French militia leader from Limoges, Le Jeune, at the Security Police headquarters and informs him of Stadler's intention.
The militia leader is pleasantly surprised and declares that he is deeply moved by the generosity of the German commander, who, as he puts it, is giving part of the French youth another opportunity to prove themselves to the true France.
At around 3 p.m. on the same day, the regimental commander personally releases the labor service unit from captivity in a solemn ceremony with a short speech. The French field chaplain, an Alsatian, acts as interpreter.

The militia leader, who immediately provides barracks, also thanks the regimental commander in a short speech for his generosity, and the French labor service men, who had been facing a long period of captivity, are extremely surprised and impressed by their sudden release. The unit then marches in formation under the command of their officers, but without any guards, through the town surrounded by Maquisards to the barracks that have been provided for them.
The march of a closed French unit makes a great impression on the population, especially in these critical and tense days. On the same day, this event is broadcast on the local radio station in Limoges.

The III./DF sets off again with some of its men on a mission to flush out an armed French gendarmerie unit that has gone over to the Maquisards in a wooded area. However, the unit's departure has obviously been discovered. Only two or three Frenchmen are captured and a few German soldiers are freed. The gendarmerie unit has escaped.
The rest of the day was spent making preparations for departure.

The court martial investigation of the Oradour case.

Immediately after arriving in Normandy, the investigation into the events in Oradour-sur-Glane began. Diekmann, company commander Kahn, the regimental adjutant, Hstuf. Werner, and several junior officers were questioned by the divisional court.
It emerged that Sturmbannführer Diekmann had found the bodies of "executed German soldiers" in Oradour, as the division's commander, Sturmbannführer Stückler, had already established in 1949 for the Nuremberg defense. From the estate (files and audio tapes) of the deceased

division commander, Brigadeführer Lammerding, it emerges that he had made himself available to the Federal Government for the Oradour trial in Bordeaux in 1953. However, the Federal Government, represented by the then Legal Protection Office at the Foreign Office, refused to extradite General Lammerding to France at that time and also in the period that followed.

As a result of the court martial investigation against Diekmann, Lammerding left behind what was already known to the Legal Protection Agency and thus to the then Federal Government during the trial:

Among other things, Diekmann had found the remains of a German medical unit on the outskirts of Oradour-sur-Giane, which had apparently been burned alive with all the wounded—the driver and passenger were tied to the steering wheel. After the war, Lammerding was provided with evidence of this crime, which was also handed over to the legal protection agency.

Apart from the victims of the women and children in the church, these new facts give a different assessment of Diekmann's decision to burn down the village and shoot the men.

The court martial investigation in Normandy could not be completed because Diekmann was killed in action during the first days of the mission and his battalion suffered approximately 70–80% casualties, including dead, missing, and wounded. In addition, the commander of the 3rd Company, Hstuf. Kahn, was seriously wounded (loss of an arm) and was no longer available for further investigation.

The proceedings were concluded and submitted to the superior command authority as a closed file. The investigations of the division court, whose files were lost during the operation, were handed over by the division commander, the division's legal officer, and the court officer and are partially indicated above. In addition, the events in Tulle and Oradour were reported in the daily reports and, in accordance with existing orders, also as "special incidents."

Kahn also died a few years ago.

The Oradour trial

After the war, all events that took place during the march of the "Das Reich" division to the Normandy front were thoroughly investigated by the Permanent High Military Court in Bordeaux and judged in various trials. The death of a Maquisard was ruled murder and the burning of houses was ruled arson under civil law.
The Oradour trial, which lasted from January 13 to March 12, 1953, played a special role. The defendants were the battalion commander, Stubaf. Diekmann, the company commander of the 3rd Company, Hstuf. Kahn, and the entire 3rd Company.
A small number of the company members, who had been tracked down mainly in English prisoner-of-war camps, were handed over to the French and taken to Bordeaux. Initially, there were eight Germans and one Alsatian who had voluntarily joined the Waffen-SS, a very small number, since the vast majority had been killed or wounded in the heavy and costly fighting in Normandy, the Ardennes offensive, and in Hungary and Austria. Other members of the company, all Alsatians, arrived later.

Diekmann's behavior.

At first, it was in stark contrast to the opinion of the regimental commander, who sought to negotiate with the Maquisards in order to secure Kämpfes' surrender. However, the information obtained in the meantime from Lammerding's estate means that Diekmann's decision must now be seen in a different light.
The discovery of a new terrible crime committed by the Marquisards, this time against a German medical unit, which was known to be unarmed and under the protection of the International Red Cross, must have led him to his own decision, which he was obliged to take in accordance with the orders in force, all the more so as there was no radio contact with the regiment.

Diekmann initially wanted to free the commander of III./DF, Stubaf. Kämpfe, who was also a personal friend of his and whom he believed to be in Oradour-sur-Glane. When he did not find him there and did not take any hostages, as he had been expressly ordered to do, he must have come to the conclusion that Kämpfe was no longer alive and that the hostages were therefore no longer valid as objects of negotiation and exchange. As an officer, he was certainly aware that he was taking this decision on his own responsibility. Since his actions were in complete contradiction to the orders of his regimental commander, he had to answer for his decision before a court-martial.
The framework order of the OB-West and the order of the Wehrmacht leadership regarding the LXVI (66th) A.K. obviously played a role in his decision. Since these were irregular combatants, the most severe measures had to be taken.

However, this complex takes on a completely new dimension with regard to the burning of the church, in which women and children perished, thanks to the affidavit of retired Bundeswehr Lieutenant Colonel Eberhard Matthes, who visited Oradour-sur-Giane twice after the war and reported the following about his experiences there:

Affidavit: *)

In addition to numerous other visits of a private and official nature before and after, I spent a long period of time in November/December 1963 as an officer of the German Armed Forces at the French military training area La Courtine and in the summer of 1964 privately with my family in southwestern France (Massif Central).
Because, as a war veteran and later as district chairman of the Association of Returnees, I was asked all kinds of questions

*) Herbert Taege, op. cit., "Wo ist Kain?" (Where is Cain?), page 304 ff.

Interested in issues related to coercive measures, hostage shootings, and similar topics, I visited Oradour-sur-Giane twice, both times with a colleague.
During my first visit in December 1963, wearing a German Bundeswehr uniform and traveling in a Bundeswehr jeep with a driver, I had the following experiences:

1) The part of the village that had been destroyed in 1944 had been turned into a kind of open-air museum with kiosk-like stalls selling drinks, tobacco products, and other items, as well as brochures about the events in Oradour in June 1944—at a surprisingly low price.

2) Immediately after my arrival, my Jeep was surrounded by numerous children, but also by mostly older adults, who greeted me warmly.

3) When the older residents—who must have been around 50 to 60 years old in 1963—saw me reading one of the brochures mentioned above, some of them told me not to take the reports too literally. They said that many things had happened differently than described in the brochures. Understandably, I was immediately taken aback and said that it was bad enough that German soldiers had shot women and children in the church they had set on fire or as they tried to escape.
   The answer was clear and unambiguous: the church had not been set on fire by the Germans. On the contrary, German SS men—some risking their own lives—had rescued several women and children from the burning church. Two women in the group surrounding me even confirmed that they themselves had been saved by German soldiers at the time, otherwise they would not be standing there now.

4) In the meantime, the mayor had joined us. He introduced himself and greeted me very warmly, saying that I was the first German soldier in uniform to visit Oradour since the war. He said he was very pleased about that. Although he was politically left-wing, France was now allied with Germany and the two countries were friends. The past had to be accepted as it was.

as it was and learn the right lessons from it. In war, a lot of injustice happens everywhere. I immediately confronted him with what the residents had said, to which he replied, in essence, that the Maquis had also committed many injustices against German soldiers during that time, which was why none of the Germans accused in the Oradour trial had been sentenced to death and almost all of those sentenced to prison had been released quite soon.

5) I can still clearly remember one small episode: near the ruins of the church, there was an old pram with a sign saying that it had been burned in the massacre with a child inside. I think it was the mayor himself who smiled at the sight and said that the remains of a pram had been found there at the time. But now that Oradour had become a kind of pilgrimage site and the town was earning money from visitors, such things had to be replaced every few years.

6) My interest in the Oradour case was now understandably aroused to the highest degree. I had the opportunity to talk to French officers with whom we had an exceptionally open and friendly relationship, without any reservations. A senior French officer responded to my questions as follows:

   A key motive for the German intervention in Oradour in June 1944 was the fact that, just outside the village, members of the advancing German troops had found a German ambulance that was still burning or had been burned out. All six occupants must have been burned alive. The driver and front passenger were tied to the steering wheel. This was undoubtedly the work of the Maquis. However, behind this was also the agonizing killing, under mysterious circumstances, of a senior German officer who had fallen into the hands of the Maquis in the same area at around the same time. Even if the situation had been reversed, French troops would have had to take coercive measures, including the shooting of hostages, as was the case in

the provisions of international law during the war from 1939 to 1945 would have permitted it. For these reasons, many French soldiers and officers do not visit Oradour on official business. To his knowledge, no official military ceremonies take place in Oradour, undoubtedly for the same reasons.

7) During my second private visit to Oradour in the summer of 1964, I found further confirmation of the above account when the kiosk owner or salesman (also an elderly gentleman) from whom we had bought drinks responded to my comment about the brochures by saying: There were still a number of witnesses who knew exactly how everything had really happened in 1944. However, they had either not been heard at all during the trial or had been forced to limit their statements to insignificant details. The accused Germans had not been sentenced to death, but only to prison, and had soon been released. Otherwise, some witnesses would undoubtedly have "spilled the beans" and described the true circumstances.

signed Eberhard Matthes

Retired Lieutenant Colonel Eberhard Matthes supplemented his affidavit of November 16, 1980, on April 13, 1981, stating that in December 1963, the women who, according to their own statements, had been rescued from the burning church by soldiers in German uniform, told him, among other things, that in December November 1980 to state that in December 1963, the women who, according to their own statements, had been rescued from the burning church by soldiers in German uniform, told him, among other things, that the shooting outside the church had only begun when the church had started to burn after an explosion inside. From this it can be concluded that the explosion in the church may have been the only reason for the shooting of the male inhabitants.

When elderly women in Oradour make such statements to a German Bundeswehr officer, the entire Oradour complex appears in a completely new light. This finally removes responsibility for the burning of the church with its numerous victims, including women and children, from Diekmann's shoulders.

The destruction of the church in Oradour can therefore be attributed neither to the "DF" regiment, nor to the "Das Reich" division, nor to any other German command authority.
The fact that two French civilians drew Diekmann's attention to this particular village also raises the question of whether he was deliberately lured to Oradour in order to provoke harsh action by the Germans against the civilian population, without, however, being able to foresee such harsh measures.

The interrogation of the then Ostuf. Gerlach clearly shows that

1) Oradour-sur-Giane was in the hands of the Maquisards,
2) that the population was overwhelmingly on the side of the Maquisards,
3) that women were also active members of the Maquis, wearing steel helmets and leather jackets,
4) that the town was the command center of a higher Maquis staff (reporting agents on tandem bikes),
5) that any confusion between Oradour-sur-Giane and another Oradour is impossible.

In a conversation between the author and the then Maquis leader in the Dordogne, Jugie (known as "Gao"), in Paris in 1969, he admitted openly that weapons and ammunition were of course hidden in all the houses in Oradour, as it had been his job to supply the villages in the Corréze with weapons and ammunition. It cannot have been any different in Haute-Vienne.

Oradour in Allied war and post-war propaganda.

Shortly after the division continued its march to the invasion front, Oradour took center stage in Allied war propaganda against Germany. The name Oradour was broadcast around the world on all Allied radio stations as a symbol of shame and disgrace for the German people.

As part of this propaganda campaign, a French propaganda pamphlet claimed that a senior German police officer, in retaliation for the German casualties caused by the Maquisards, dropped a pencil on a map, the tip of which landed on Oradour-sur-Giane. He then gave the order to destroy the village and exterminate its population. There is, of course, not a word of truth in this account! The author of the division's history, Otto Weidinger, described the above account as pure enemy propaganda, devoid of any truth, during his numerous interrogations before the Permanent Military Court in Bordeaux, in the presence of the court interpreter, Mr. Daniel.

After the war, the defamation of the Waffen-SS was continued with great zeal by a large part of the new German press in connection with the Oradour case and was taken up by the mass media, radio, and television, where it continues unabated to this day despite all counterstatements from the German side. The impression is always given that Oradour was a peaceful village that was wiped out out of the blue for no reason whatsoever. How this German action came about in the first place is fundamentally concealed.

It must be emphasized once again that the SS Division "Das Reich," as an integral part of the German armed forces in France, was, as everywhere and always in war, subordinate to army command and had to carry out its orders.

Strict discipline had been particularly emphasized in the division since its inception and would have been enforced by harsh judgments of the division court if necessary.

Oradour – also a French " " problem.

However, the Oradour incident also posed a considerable problem and a tragedy of a special kind for France:

One third of the 3rd Company consisted of Alsatians who had been conscripted into the Waffen-SS. In addition, it was precisely

the platoon with the Alsatians that was assigned to secure and guard the church in Oradour.
Since France had never recognized the reincorporation of Alsace-Lorraine into the German Reich under international law, these Alsatians were French citizens who had fought on the enemy side and participated in the events in Oradour as commanders. A tragedy for these men—and for France!
Another problem was the fact that many Alsatians from the 3rd Company had become soldiers in the French army after the war, had fought in Indochina for several years, and had been awarded French medals for bravery! They too were brought to Bordeaux one day—in French uniforms! They were kept strictly separated from their German comrades of the 3rd Company in prison.
Soon afterwards, there was a sharp reaction in the Elsaß. The Alsatian deputies in the French National Assembly categorically demanded that all Alsatians who had been conscripted into the Waffen-SS be released immediately, unless there were serious political developments in the Elsaß — obviously referring to independence efforts.
The sensitivity of France in this area is demonstrated by the fact that the Alsatians of the 3rd Company in French uniforms were released shortly thereafter. This was very gratifying for the young Alsatians—but from a legal and human point of view, it was a gross injustice to their Reich German comrades, who had been drafted into the Waffen-SS just like the Alsatians.
The fact that about half of these men were not yet eighteen years old at the time of the incident and therefore not criminally responsible was completely ignored.
During joint pretrial detention in Bordeaux, the author inquired among the men of the 3rd Company about the mental state of Sturmbannführer Diekmann in Oradour. They unanimously stated that, with an expression of cold, grim determination—obviously after the discussion with the mayor—he had marched up and down the village street and that no one would have dared to disobey him. These men were therefore in a clear state of emergency, which the court also recognized, and they were acquitted.

village street and that no one would have dared to disobey him. These men were therefore clearly in a state of necessity, which was also not taken into account by the court.
How cruel war can be, forcing young, innocent, and legally incompetent men into this devil's trap of moral dilemma and financial hardship from which there is practically no escape. None of them would have found themselves in such a terrible situation in peacetime and civilian life.

State of emergency for Diekmann?

As far as the burning of Oradour and the shooting of the male inhabitants of the village are concerned, Diekmann's "Sperrle order" seems to have played a role. Members of the 3rd Company reported that during the fire, ammunition and explosives detonated in almost all of the houses.
The "Sperrte order" describes quick and decisive action as a priority; it reads as follows:
... "Only after these or similar immediate measures **have been taken will the report** be **made."** And elsewhere: **"In view of the current situation, overly harsh** measures cannot **be grounds for punishment."**
This order was issued on February 3, 1944, when resistance against the German occupying forces was still in its infancy! Did it not apply in particular to the stronghold of the Maquis in the French Massif Central?
And the order of the LXVI (66th) Res.AK states, among other things:
"The expectation is expressed that the bands in southern France **will be dealt with extremely harshly and** without any **leniency, and that ruthless severity** is essential." (Forwarding of an order from the Wehrmacht leadership.) These are clear and unambiguous orders that had to be obeyed.

The call for " " resistance.

These German orders are contrasted with the daily order issued by the High Command of the FTPF — Zone South (Francs-

Ti r e urs-Partisans de France = Partisan Freischärler - Communist Partisans) on June 6, 1944. *) This daily order states:

> "The hour of decisive battles has come... Hitler's army, defeated and decimated in the east by the glorious Red Army, is now only a shadow of what it was in 1940...
>
> This is France's hour: ... so that all invaders may be hunted down and all traitors crushed; that all able-bodied men, young and old, may take up arms; that women and children may be mobilized to help the fighters ... for a French victory alongside our great Soviet, English, and American allies... we order... all officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers of the FTPF
>
> 1) In every territory — together with the armed internal forces — to mobilize all able-bodied men into patriotic militias; in the factories, the cities, the villages; ...
>
> 2) Wherever the state of forces allows — which is the case as of today in the vast provinces of Savoy, the Alps, the Massif Central, and Limousin — to do everything possible to liberate these areas and turn them into bases of resistance and attack.
>
> In these areas:
> Destruction of all German garrisons and all units of Darnand's Waffen-SS militias; Disarmament and capture of police officers, gendarmes, and members of the GMR who refuse to join forces with the patriots; Removal of the Vichy administration and return of all power to the liberation committees; Opening of prisons and immediate arming of all liberated patriots who are capable of bearing arms ...

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*) Herbert Taege, op. cit., "Wo ist Kain?" (Where is Cain?), p. 217

3) Wherever forces are not currently contributing to the advantage of the armed patriots, use guerrilla tactics and help the people to recognize the national uprising ...
... incessantly disrupt the small German garrisons, the DCA posts, the isolated units; kill the murderers and leaders of the militia without mercy wherever they are found.

4) ... Open the ranks of the FTPF to thousands upon thousands of Frenchmen ...
Forward... No pity, no mercy! ..."

When you read this order of the day, you know what happened on June 9 and 10, 1944, and that neither Tulle nor Oradour were peaceful places on those days.
With such categorical orders, formulated with the utmost severity, coming from both sides, an explosion such as the one that occurred in Tulle and, one day later, in Oradour was almost inevitable.
Only the "right of the victor" allows that to this day no crime, no matter how terrible, committed by the Maquisards has been punished by the courts, while all the blame has been placed on the loser of the war, the German people, even though it has been proven beyond doubt that this fight was started by the Maquisards.

The tragedy for the people of Oradour.

The women and children of Oradour were initially taken to the church, presumably with the intention of separating them from the men, who were initially taken hostage. There was certainly no intention to "liquidate" the women and children.
Since, according to the affidavit of retired Lieutenant Colonel Matthes, the church was clearly not set on fire by the Germans, it burned down after the Maquisards detonated explosives, causing violent explosions. According to statements made by men from the 3rd Company, the heat generated was so intense that the bell in the tower melted and fell to the ground.

Matthes also states that, according to the female residents of Oradour, the shooting at the barns did not begin until after the church had been blown up.
Matthes also states that, according to the female residents of Oradour, the shooting at the barns did not begin until after the church had been blown up.
The purpose of holding the men captive and guarding them in the barns was obviously to guard hostages with as little effort as possible, from whom the maquis leaders were to be singled out on Stadler's orders to serve as exchange prisoners for combatants. It is possible that Diekmann only learned at a later point that combat was no longer possible.
After the church was blown up with detonating ammunition, which was probably interpreted by those responsible for guarding the men as the start of partisan fighting, the order to shoot at the barns was presumably given.
Now back to Diekmann's report:
He believed that the church had caught fire because he had no other explanation for it.
It was natural for him, as the person responsible for this action, to take responsibility for the shooting of the men.
Since he could not imagine that the church would be blown up by Maquisards, he took responsibility for the entire incident as the soldier in charge.
Why did the Maquisards blow up the explosives and ammunition they had stored in the church? We can only speculate. Perhaps to prevent them from falling into German hands? Or to turn the burning church into a beacon for a general uprising of the French people against the German occupying forces and to stir up hatred against the Germans? After all, central France, with the Corréze and Dordogne regions, was the center of the entire French resistance under purely communist leadership.
The worst thing was the tragic death of the women and children who were caught up in this disastrous event and lost their lives in the burning church. Their tragic

fate will always be deeply regretted by us Germans.

The verdicts in the Oradour trial .

From January 13 to March 12, 1953—that is, for eight weeks—the great Oradour trial took place before the Permanent Superior Military Court in Bordeaux, accompanied by a huge propaganda effort and attended by numerous journalists from the world press, including the Alsatians who had been released.

It goes without saying that this was not an independent, neutral court, but rather a veritable "victor's tribunal" over the vanquished. At least two leaders of the Resistance had to serve as assessors on the military court.

In its verdicts, the court applied double standards for internal political reasons:

43 members of the 3rd Company were sentenced to death in absentia.

One German Oberscharführer who had been transferred from the Luftwaffe to the Waffen-SS and

one Alsatian Unterscharführer who had voluntarily joined the Waffen-SS were sentenced to death in absentia.

The German company members were sentenced to 8-12 years of forced labor.

The Alsatians, on the other hand, who had been drafted into the Waffen-SS, received between 4 and 8 years of forced labor. Unlike the Germans, these sentences were suspended on probation.

One German was acquitted.

While the Alsatians were released immediately after the trial and allowed to return home, the Germans had to serve their sentences. After their sentences were reduced several times, they were released after several months.

After some time, the two death row inmates were sentenced to life imprisonment and later to long prison terms.

They were finally released in 1959, after spending a total of 14 years in captivity, in investigative detention, and in prison since 1945.

The Tulle trial.

This trial took place on July 5, 1951. The following sentences were handed down:

Division Commander General Lammerding: death penalty in absentia Hauptsturmführer Kowatsch, ic der Div.: death penalty in absentia
Hauptscharführer Hoff, Pi.Zg.Führer AA: life imprisonment
Sturmbannführer Wulf, commander of the Panzer reconnaissance unit:
10 years of forced labor and 10 years of ban from France
Wulf returned after his release and pardon in May 1952, Hoff was released after a cassation hearing in 1953.
The French court-appointed defense attorneys, led by Maitre de la Pradelle, deserve special mention for doing their utmost to help their German and Alsatian clients.

Between 1951 and 1953, several more trials were held against men from various units of the "Das Reich" division. Some were convicted, some were given suspended sentences, and some were acquitted.
Fourteen years after the end of the war, in 1959, all trials were finally concluded and all those convicted returned home.

In view of the tragic intertwining of guilt and fate on both sides, the German and French governments have, by mutual agreement, closed this painful and tragic chapter in the history of our two peoples and brought it to a definitive end. *)

*) The report on Tulle and Oradour was supplemented and expanded with relevant additions following an evaluation of the estate of Gruf. Heinz Lammerding and the latest research findings by Herbert Taege.

In conclusion and summary, it should be noted once again that the Maquisards' struggle against the German occupying forces was conducted in violation of the German-French Armistice Agreement of 1940, in violation of the Hague Convention on Land Warfare, and in grave violation of the
"Geneva Convention" in the treatment of German prisoners.
The German army had no interest in fighting the French, but was solely concerned with repelling the Allied invasion in Normandy.
However, if France, led by the Communist FTPF, nevertheless wanted to fight for its liberation in violation of bilateral and international treaties, it had to expect the harshest German countermeasures and accept them.
How would France have acted in the opposite case?

The "Das Reich" division never struck first; its operations against the Maquisards were always merely reactions to the crimes committed by the Maquisards against German soldiers and civilians.
Despite extensive coverage of the complex Tulle and Oradour cases, many further details and research findings could not be included in this documentation.
In this context, reference is made to the book by Herbert Taege published in autumn 1981: "Wo ist Kain?" (Where is Cain?) — Revelations and documents on the Tulle and Oradour complex
ASKANIA-Verlag Lindhorst, published in autumn 1981.

Marching on to the invasion front

All investigations into Sturmbannführer Kämpfe had been unsuccessful.
On June 12, 1944, the division marched with wheeled vehicles — Regiment
"DF" at the front — to continue its march to the invasion front on National Road 147 via Bellac — Poitiers and on National Road 10 via Tours to the La Fleche area.

Afterword

It is high time that we jointly address and remove the last obstacle to the final reconciliation and friendship between our two peoples—this Franco-German tragedy of Tulle and Oradour.

To this end, we are happy to take up the suggestion made by Weltbild editor Eugen Georg Schwarz, who, however, in his article on Oradour—contrary to the results of detailed research that are now available and against his better judgment—blames the German side for the deaths of the women and children in the church.

At the end of this article, he proposes that a joint Franco-German commission of historians of equal standing be finally established to conduct an objective investigation into all the events in Tulle and Oradour — and we would add — its background and the course of the major Oradour trial in 1953 before the Permanent High Military Court in Bordeaux, with the unconditional release of all files on Tulle and Oradour held in the archives and blocked until 2039.

Then, finally, the version of the communist resistance movement about Tulle and Oradour, which was unreservedly adopted as an integral part of the entire Allied war propaganda and continues to this day, could be replaced by a proportionate and fair attribution of blame as a contribution to historical truth, for the benefit of our two peoples and of Europe.

We have only one wish, that the tragedy for the civilian population—as in the case of Oradour—which, unfortunately, has not remained an isolated case in the world since the end of the war, never be repeated.

Appendix 1)

Armistice Agreement
between Germany and France
of June 22, 1940
— Excerpt — *)

Between the Chief of the High Command of the Armed Forces, General Keitel, acting on behalf of the Leader of the German Reich and Supreme Commander of the German Armed Forces, and the plenipotentiaries of the French Government, acting with full powers: Army General Huntzinger, Chairman of the Delegation, French Ambassador Noel, Vice Admiral Le Luc, Army Corps General Parisot, and Air Force General Bergeret, the following armistice agreement has been concluded:

1) The French government shall cause the cessation of hostilities against the German Reich in France and in French possessions, colonies, protectorates, and mandates, as well as at sea. It shall order the immediate surrender of French forces already surrounded by German troops.

2) To secure the interests of the German Reich ...

3) In the occupied parts of France, the German Reich exercises all rights of the occupying power. The French government undertakes to support the orders issued in the exercise of these rights with all means and to carry them out with the assistance of the French administration. All French authorities and agencies in the occupied territory are therefore to be immediately

*) The unabridged text is available in the Federal Archives — Military Archives in Freiburg.

to comply with the orders of the German military commanders and to cooperate with them in a proper manner.

4) The French armed forces on land, at sea, and in the air shall be demobilized and disarmed within a period to be determined. The only exceptions shall be those units necessary for maintaining internal order.

5) As a guarantee for compliance with the armistice

6) The remaining weapons, ammunition, and war material

7) In the territory to be occupied, all land and coastal fortifications shall be ....

8) The French navy .....

9) The French High Command has informed the German High Command

10) The French government undertakes not to continue hostile acts against the German Reich with any part of its remaining armed forces or in any other manner. The French government will likewise prevent members of the French armed forces from leaving the country and prevent weapons and equipment of any kind, ships, aircraft, etc., from being transported to England or other foreign countries.
The French government will prohibit French nationals from fighting against the German Reich in the service of states with which the German Reich is still at war.
French nationals who violate this provision will be treated as guerrilla fighters by German troops.

11) — 20) Further measures regulating the armistice in detail ....

21) The French government is responsible for ensuring .....

The French government is obliged to pay compensation for all destruction, damage, or delays that violate the treaty.

22) The implementation of the Armistice Agreement shall be regulated and supervised by a German Armistice Commission, which shall act in accordance with the instructions of the German High Command. The Armistice Commission shall also ensure that this Agreement is in accordance with the Italian-French Armistice Agreement. The French government shall send a delegation to the headquarters of the German Armistice Commission to represent French interests and receive the implementing provisions from the German Armistice Commission.

23) This armistice agreement shall enter into force

24) The armistice agreement shall remain in force until the conclusion of the peace treaty. It may be terminated by the German government at any time with immediate effect if the French government fails to fulfill the obligations it has assumed under the agreement.

This armistice agreement was signed in the forest of Compiègne on June 22, 1940, at 6:50 p.m. German summer time.

signed Hunzinger signed Keitel

Author's notes:

This armistice agreement only listed those points that were relevant to the fighting of the German Armed Forces, within the framework of which and under whose command the 2nd SS Panzer Division "Das Reich" fought against the French resistance movement in the spring and summer of 1944.

The underlining in points 10) and 21) was added to clarify the legal situation of the German troops deployed.

The German-French Armistice Commission was still fully active in 1944, as no peace treaty had ever been concluded. It therefore seems all the more strange that French authorities wanted to involve the Armistice Commission in the Tulle and Oradour cases, even though it was the resistance fighters who had blatantly violated this armistice agreement. According to point 10) of this treaty, even the two French tank divisions that were stationed in the US, landed in France, and entered the fight against the German Wehrmacht were "freedom fighters" under international law.

O. W.

Appendix 2):

Order of Laws and Customs **of Land Warfare** from October 10, 1907 (Hague Convention on Land Warfare)

— Excerpt — "

Section One Belligerents

First Chapter
Definition of belligerents Article 1

The laws, rights, and duties of war are not only applicable to the army, but also to militias and volunteer corps, provided they fulfill the following conditions:

1) that they are commanded by someone who is responsible for his subordinates,
2) that they bear a distinctive sign recognizable from a distance,
3) that they bear arms openly,
4) that they observe the laws and customs of war in their operations.

Article 2

The population of an unoccupied territory who, on the approach of the enemy, takes up arms on its own initiative to fight the invading forces, without having had time to organize itself in accordance with Article 1, shall be considered as belligerent if it carries arms openly and observes the laws and customs of war.

*) The unabridged text is available in the Federal Archives — Military Archives in Freiburg.

Article 3

The armed forces of the warring parties may consist of combatants and non-combatants. In the event of capture by the enemy, both are entitled to treatment as prisoners of war.

Chapter II **Prisoners of war** Article 4

Prisoners of war shall be subject to the authority of the enemy government, but not to the authority of the persons or units which captured them. They shall be treated humanely.
Everything that belongs to them personally shall remain their property, with the exception of weapons, horses, and documents of a military nature.

Articles 5–19: Further rights and duties of prisoners of war

Chapter III
Sick and wounded

Article 21
The duties of the belligerents with regard to the treatment of the sick and wounded are determined by the Geneva Convention.

Article 22
The belligerents shall not have unlimited rights in the choice of means of damaging the enemy.

Article 23
Apart from the prohibitions established by special agreements, the following are specifically prohibited:

a) The use of poison or poisoned weapons,
b) the treacherous killing or wounding of members of the enemy population or army,
c) the killing or wounding of an enemy who has laid down his arms or is defenseless, who has surrendered to mercy or to the enemy's mercy,
d) the declaration that no quarter will be given,
e) the use of weapons, projectiles, or substances that are likely to cause unnecessary suffering,
f) the misuse of the flag of parison, the national flag or military insignia or the uniform of the enemy, as well as the special insignia of the Geneva Convention.

Article 40

Any serious violation of the ceasefire by either party shall entitle the other party to terminate it and, in urgent cases, even to resume hostilities immediately.

Author's notes:

The German High Command never regarded the Maquisards as "warlords," but rather, in accordance with the ceasefire agreement, as "freedom fighters."
Even though General Eisenhower had declared the French resistance groups "part of the internal French armed forces," this had no effect under international law, as this declaration was completely one-sided and was never recognized by the German side.
However, selbst wenn sich die resistance movement as
Although the French government considered the group to be "part of the French armed forces" and under unified command, it did not "wear any specific insignia that could be recognized from a distance."

. It did not "carry its weapons openly" and "did not observe the laws and customs of war in any of its operations" — on the contrary, in most cases it acted inhumanely.
The German soldiers who fell into the hands of the Maquisards were in no case treated as "prisoners of war," but instead met a terrible end.
Contrary to the Hague Land Warfare Convention, they were subject
"always subject to the power of the persons or units that captured them."
In contrast to Article 23, the communist Maquisards were guilty of:
"the treacherous killing of members of the German people and army," (burning German wounded in an ambulance, murdering four military police officers, murdering 64 German soldiers in Tulle, and murdering 62 Germans who were members of the railway personnel and medical services—only in the barracks of the "Das Reich" division).

Appendix 3):

Excerpt from RGBl. 1934 II, pp. 227–254

Agreement
(translation)
on the treatment of prisoners of war
of July 27, 1929
(Geneva Convention)
— Excerpt — *)

The German Reich President pp.

Recognizing that it is the duty of every power, in the extreme case of war, to mitigate the inevitable harshness of war and to improve the lot of prisoners of war,

Desiring to further develop the principles underlying the international Hague Conventions, in particular the Convention on the Laws and Customs of War and the order annexed thereto,

have decided to conclude an agreement to this end and have appointed as their plenipotentiaries: pp.

Title I
General provisions
Article 1

This Agreement shall apply, without prejudice to the provisions of Title VII, to:

1.) all persons mentioned in Articles 1, 2, and 3 of the Annex to the Hague Convention of October 18, 1907, concerning the laws and customs of war on land, who have been captured by the enemy. .....

2.) . . At sea and in the air . ...

The unabridged text is available in the Federal Archives — Military Archives in Freiburg.

Article 2

Prisoners of war shall be subject to the authority of the hostile power, but not to that of the persons or units which captured them.
They must be treated humanely at all times and protected in particular against violence, insults, and public curiosity.
Retaliatory measures against them are prohibited!

Article 3

Prisoners of war shall be entitled to respect for their persons and their honor. Women shall be treated with all consideration due to their sex.
Prisoners shall retain their full civil legal capacity.

Article 4

The State in whose power prisoners of war are held (detaining power) is responsible for their maintenance.

Differences in the treatment of prisoners of war are permissible only insofar as they are based on privileges granted on account of military rank, physical or mental health, professional qualifications, or gender.

Second Article
Capture

Article 5

Every prisoner of war is obliged to state his real name and rank or his registration number when asked.

If he acts contrary to this provision, he may be deprived of the privileges accorded to prisoners of war of his category.
No coercion shall be exercised on prisoners of war to obtain information about the situation of their army or country.

Prisoners of war who refuse to give information on this subject shall not be threatened, insulted, or subjected to any kind of inconvenience or disadvantage.
If a prisoner of war is unable to identify himself because of his physical or mental condition, he shall be handed over to the medical service.

Article 6

All personal effects and articles of personal use, except weapons, horses, military equipment, and documents of a military nature, shall remain in the possession of prisoners of war, as shall steel helmets and gas masks.

Money in the possession of prisoners of war may only be taken from them on the orders of an officer and after the amounts have been determined. A receipt shall be issued for this. The amounts thus taken shall be credited to each prisoner of war.
Identity cards, rank insignia, decorations, and valuables shall not be taken from prisoners of war.

Note: Beyond these general provisions, all subsequent titles, sections, and articles deal with the specific features of prisoner of war status, such as repatriation, prisoner of war camps, camp facilities, food and clothing, health care in the camps, the spiritual needs of prisoners of war, discipline in the camps, etc., which are not relevant to the present documentation.

Author's concluding remarks: In summary, it can be said that the communist maquisards who took up the fight against the "Das Reich" division did not violate Articles 1, 2, and 3 of the General Provisions of the German Criminal Code, nor did they commit any other criminal acts. provisions of this agreement .

Source

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Otto Weidinger:	DIVISION DAS REICH — The Path of the 2. SS-Pz.Div. "Das Reich" — The History of the Stammdivision of the Waffen-SS, Volume V Munin-Verlag GmbH, Osnabrück 1982
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Appendices:	Armistice Agreement between Germany and France of June 22, 1940 (excerpt)
	Regulations concerning the laws and customs of war on land of October 18, 1907 (Hague Convention) — Excerpt —
	Agreement on the Treatment of Prisoners of War of July 27, 1929 (Geneva Convention) Translation and excerpt from the RGBI 1934 II; pages 227–254

The author:

Otto Weidinger was the last commander of the SS-Pz.Gren.Rgt.4 "DF" in the 2nd SS Panzer Division "Das Reich." During his six and a half years as a prisoner of war, he was handed over by the Americans from the Dachau subcamp to France in August 1947 and was held in French military custody at the Permanent Higher Military Court in Bordeaux until June 1951—three and a half years. In numerous interrogations, he made statements about Tulle and Oradour to the extent that he could recount them from his own experience, as he was assigned to the regiment's staff for "informational services" at the time in question.
"DF" was in command.
Since he was not charged with the events in Tulle and Oradour, he was tried together with 50 comrades from his division in a summary trial on the sole charge of "voluntary membership of the Waffen-SS as a 'criminal organization.'"
He and all his comrades were acquitted of this charge by the Bordeaux Military Court (June 19, 1951) and were released from French captivity on June 23, 1951.
After his return home, he published the history of the "DF" regiment in the following years under the title:
"Comrades to the End" in 1962 by K.W. Schütz-Verlag KG, Preuß. Oldendort, and the six-volume history of his division under the title: DIVISION DAS REICH 1967-1982 by Munin-Verlag GmbH, Osnabrück.
He has commented on the "Tulle and Oradour" case in numerous publications and responses to press articles.